

ADDICTED TO STOP-LOSS: ARMY PERSONNEL READINESS IN THE GWOT ERA

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**ADDICTED TO STOP-LOSS:
ARMY PERSONNEL READINESS
IN THE GWOT ERA**

by

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United States Army

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ADDICTED TO STOP-LOSS: ARMY PERSONNEL READINESS IN THE GWOT ERA

The human dimension has always been the most critical dimension of military operations. Soldiers as individuals and in groups are the ultimate locus of ground operations...As history repeatedly demonstrates, it is extremely difficult to anticipate with any certainty what future conflicts U.S. joint forces will face. What is likely is that persistent conflict will be the norm for many years to come. For the Army this means human engagement with a broad and varied collection of populations and organizations.¹

—TRADOC Information Pamphlet
Human Dimension in the Future 2015-2024

The Army is its people, its Soldiers. The Army wins on the battlefield because of its Soldiers. If technology could win wars there would be no need for Soldiers or "boots on the ground". In a unit requiring 200 Soldiers, if it deploys with only 80%, then the unit is short 40 Soldiers and thus, not fully capable of accomplishing its missions in today's complex modern hybrid war. In order to meet the demand for Army forces in the GWOT (Global War on Terrorism) era, it is not surprising then, that the Army has had to rely on a policy that retains service members beyond their contractual service obligation – a policy known as Stop-Loss.

Since 2003, Army leaders have become addicted to Stop-Loss as a tool to fix chronic personnel shortages. No other branch of the Armed Forces has relied on Stop-Loss for other than brief, short-term requirements.² The Secretary of Defense and more directly, the Secretary of the Army should approve a policy restricting the routine and long-term use of Stop-Loss to include provisions that Soldiers who met their initial 8-year service commitment and those who successfully completed a full combat tour would not be subject to Stop-Loss.

The Army's reliance on Stop-Loss to manage and improve unit personnel readiness has a growing number of critics most notably the American people and the U.S. Congress. A change is necessary to prevent an escalating anti-draft or backdoor draft sentiment.³ Stop-Loss is a personnel management tool DOD would like to curtail, as it remains unpopular with Congress and the American people.⁴ Continued long-term use of Stop-Loss will continue to tear at the American people's basic faith in the military as a place of high standards and fair play. In addition, long-term use of Stop-Loss will undermine the Army's efforts to honor the ideal of an All Volunteer force. The Army must honor the enlistment contract for the young men and women who have served their country and completed their basic contractual obligations.

However, DOD recognizes that without Stop-Loss the Army is unable to maintain sufficient personnel at the unit level. Stop-Loss is designed specifically to enhance unit-level personnel readiness and support unit cohesion. The Army has insufficient available personnel and a concern over unit cohesion that compels Army leaders to rely on the Stop-Loss policy; otherwise unit level missions may be compromised. This is especially an acute concern as the current procedure of unit rotations is meant to preserve unit integrity by keeping unit Soldiers together as they train for combat, deploy to combat and redeploy to home station. This contrasts with the individual Soldier replacement system used during America's last long war, the Vietnam War.

An individual replacement system would be simpler for the Army to manage, however, the Vietnam model for personnel manning was found to be deficient especially with regard to maintaining unit cohesion and combat readiness, "In a profession where unit cohesion, combat experience and competent leadership mark the difference

between victory and defeat, the Army's rotation policy made little sense to those who lived through it."⁵

Programs and strategies the Army uses to help mitigate the gap between available personnel and structure include such management tools as tiered readiness and Authorized Level of Organization (ALO), the Officer Distribution Plan (ODP) and the Enlisted Distribution Target Model (EDTM), Cross-leveling and MOS Substitution, increased contracting support, reducing the number of Soldiers in the Training, Transient, Holdee, Student (TTHS) account, and increasing monetary incentives to improve both retention and recruiting. Many of these strategies remain in place.

These strategies are important personnel management practices used to mitigate chronic personnel shortages. They enable the Army to solve immediate problems but can create other problems later. Such practices are often referred to as the idiom of – “robbing Peter to pay Paul”; a principle that is a growing competency of military personnel managers in the GWOT era.⁶ Prior to 2003 and Stop-Loss, chronic personnel shortages were masked by using these programs and strategies. However, in the long term and under the current high demand for forces coupled with a unit rotation methodology, personnel shortage management techniques cannot cover all the Army's requirements without Stop-Loss.

The Army is entering its seventh year of persistent conflict, and operational demand continues to outpace supply. Most Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) are experiencing their third or fourth combat rotations, with unit dwell periods at approximately one year. In addition, the Army is experiencing an increasing percentage of non-deployable Soldiers, which degrades deployed strength and necessitates the over-manning of BCTs. Individual Soldier dwell challenges will continue to rise during FY 2008-2010, adding additional complexity to the challenge of efficiently managing the force, especially in regards to low density high demand critical skills specialties.⁷

A major change to the way the Army manages readiness is the move away from the tiered readiness strategy to that of ARFORGEN (Army Force Generation). Tiered readiness is a strategy in which the Army's senior leaders prioritized which units were to be fully resourced based on their importance or the likelihood that the unit would be deployed on short-notice. ARFORGEN is the structured progression of increased unit readiness over time resulting in recurring periods of availability of trained, ready, and cohesive units. It is a predictably, cyclic unit readiness cycle.⁸

Army Management Programs Designed to Mitigate Personnel Shortfalls

With nearly 1.1 million Soldiers on active duty, in the U.S. Army Reserves, and in the Army National Guard, it is not immediately obvious why the Army would need to rely on Stop-Loss. It is a policy that provides modest improvements for a deploying units' personnel readiness. With so many Soldiers, how is it the Army remains vulnerable to personnel shortages at the unit level?

Many personnel programs exist to bolster unit manning for specific periods of time but after 7 years of war, the long standing personnel management system of filling the Army's structure with insufficient personnel is more challenging than ever before. The long-term capacity of these strategies and programs is falling short.⁹

Prior to 2003 most of these shortages could be cloaked through the programs already mentioned . For example, chronic personnel shortages were managed through policies such as tiered readiness where the Army's senior leaders prioritized what units were fully resourced based on their importance or likelihood to be deployed on short-notice. These units were often considered early entry or rapid deployment units. They often appeared at the top of the Time Phased Force Deployment List (TPFDL) and as

such needed a higher level of personnel readiness to be prepared for the next, unpredictable, deployment, such as the Army Rangers and the 82d Airborne Division. This is also known as the first to fight principle.¹⁰

Under tiered readiness the Army took risk in trying to predict what units would be needed first and leaving the others at a lower state of readiness because of manning shortfalls. Today, given the current operational tempo and the use of the Army Force Generation Model (ARFORGEN) more units more often become the priority as they cycle through the model and personnel readiness becomes an even greater challenge.¹¹

Much like tiered readiness, the Army has also used models for distributing personnel fill called the Officer Distribution Plan (ODP) for officers and for the enlisted force called the Enlisted Distribution Target Model (EDTM). Both of these models distributed chronic personnel shortfalls across the Army based on the assigned prescribed readiness levels of every Army organization. These models remain intact under ARFORGEN.

Additionally, personnel shortage mitigation comes in many other forms. Another example of the “Peter – Paul” idiom is personnel cross-leveling. Cross-leveling suggests a balance. However, the reality is that soldiers move voluntarily or involuntarily between Active, United States Army Reserve (USAR) or Army National Guard units that are not in the queue to deploy in order to increase personnel readiness for the current collection of deploying units. The result of cross-leveling is that it usually leaves personnel shortfalls in the losing unit.

Presumably, with a larger force or a lower demand for forces, the personnel shortages of the losing unit would be corrected in all probability, before its upcoming

deployment. However, this is often not the case today because demand has more units entering the queue for deployment than the Army can reassign personnel. It appears that chronic reliance on cross-leveling to meet emerging requirements can cause deeper and wider shortages in the long term.

When cross-leveling does not fill the deploying unit's personnel shortages then a personnel manager can request personnel using the MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) Substitution Policy. MOS substitution, for example, allows select combat arms Soldiers deploying to Iraq or Kuwait to fill personnel positions of any other combat arms Soldier, and presumes the combat arms MOSs are equivalent. For example, if the manning document requires a Field Artillery Soldier, an Infantry Soldier can legitimately fill the position. On a larger scale, MOS substitution can become whole unit substitution. This procedure requires a unit mission change known as "In Lieu of Missions" or "In Lieu of Units." A combination of MOS substitution and In Lieu of Units is not uncommon today. For example, a Soldier holding any valid MOS may fill vacancies in units reconfigured as security forces, convoy security, force protection, detainee operations, and etc...¹²

The Army Force Generation Model continues to reinforce the "Peter-Paul" idiom. Soldiers taken from one unit to solve today's shortages in that unit, mortgages the donor unit's future. A non-personnel example can be found in most of the Army's unit level motor-pools when motor sergeants cope with a shortage of spare parts. This practice is known as controlled substitution...but Soldiers call it cannibalization, a process rendering one vehicle completely non-operational for the long-term in order to fix others in the short-term. Often the cannibalized vehicle will then require months of work to

improve its readiness level in order to operate safely and reliably. This is a key point to consider before cannibalizing a unit's personnel readiness in order to fix today's personnel readiness crisis.

Another mitigation strategy is to contract civilian personnel to fill shortages in the institutional Army or the generating force, to free up Soldiers currently occupying spaces in the training base or combat service support roles for operational assignments in deploying units. This migration strategy promotes an unintended transformation of the Army to a single mission – to fight on the battlefield. This may have long-term negative consequences.¹³

This transformational strategy is already having an impact on the balance between the Army's operating and generating forces. Currently, the Army has the smallest percentage of its personnel end-strength committed to the generating force compared to the other branches of the armed forces. Only 27 percent of the Army's end-strength is in the generating force compared to 50 percent of the Navy and Air force in their institutional formations. The risk to the Army is that it is losing one of its core competencies – to train.¹⁴

Although the Army continues to hold onto many of these personnel shortage mitigation strategies, the All-Volunteer Force remains under constant pressure to fully support the ongoing operations in the Global War on Terrorism. Most notably is the unrelenting pressure on the country's land power forces – primarily the U.S. Army and Marines for duty in Afghanistan and Iraq. Prior to the Army's routine use of Stop-Loss, the Army relied more heavily on many of these other programs to help manage personnel shortages across the force with moderate success. However, the Army could

no longer manage the personnel shortfall¹⁵ as it has for decades. Under the current operating tempo – the current high demand for land forces compels the Army's use of Stop-Loss.

However, even with the helpful addition of Stop-Loss, the Army continues to rely on many of these strategies and programs to mitigate current manning shortfalls. According to General Casey, the Army's Chief of Staff, "Over the next two years we know we will not meet everyone's needs."¹⁶ The Stop-Loss Policy has not fixed the chronic manning shortfall that has persisted during much of the history of the All-Volunteer Force.

Stop-Loss Enacted

"...Stop-Loss should be accepted as a national response that is legitimate, necessary, and expected."¹⁷ Nested in Title X law, the President's Stop-Loss authority derives from section 12305 of Title 10, United States Code. Stop-Loss requires a national emergency or Presidential call-up to initiate. The President may

...suspend any provision of law relating to promotion, retirement, or separation applicable to any member of the armed forces determined to be essential to the national security of the United States, and (2) to determine, for the purposes of said section, that members of the armed forces are essential to the national security of the United States.¹⁸

The first use of this authority was on 22 August 1990 when President George H.W. Bush issued Executive Order 12728 and delegated Stop-Loss authority to the Secretary of Defense. On 19 September 2001, Secretary of Defense, Mr. Donald Rumsfeld, delegated Stop-Loss authority to each military department in the Armed Forces; currently this delegation remains unchanged. Stop-Loss was rarely used until the attacks of September, 11, 2001 when in response, President George W. Bush,

proclaimed a national emergency on September 14th. The United States remains under this national emergency authority today.

Currently Stop-Loss for the Army restricts uniformed members from voluntarily separating from the service at the end of their commitment if their unit is deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan. Many are critical of the Stop-Loss policy and think Stop-Loss operates as a backdoor draft. While legal, Stop-Loss may strike many as unethical and unfair especially those who doubt the wisdom of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Stop-Loss policy then appears to run contrary to the stated policy of the United States, which is to use an All-Volunteer Force (AVF).¹⁹ As of February 2009, only the Army uses Stop-Loss to meet their personnel readiness requirements.²⁰

Individuals enlisting into the Armed Forces, active, guard and reserves, receive a standard contract obligating them to 8-years of military service, usually with some portion of that service to be in an inactive duty status. Following separation from active duty, each individual elects to serve in the Selected Reserves or the Individual Ready Reserves to satisfy the remainder of the contract.

Winning the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), in an environment of persistent conflict and Army modular Transformation, remains the Army's top priority. Manning initiatives, priorities and actions are designed to support this environment. Personnel allocation decisions rely heavily on whether a unit is deployed, preparing to deploy, or not deployed.²¹

Stop-Loss is not limited to just active duty Soldiers. Stop-Loss affects Soldiers in the three Army components: the active Army, the U.S. Army Reserve and the Army National Guard. Soldiers with separation dates that fall within 90 days of their deployment date or mobilization date through the deployment, currently 12 months to OIF or OEF and for a maximum of 90 days following the redeployment are all affected.²²

Since 2002, as many as 120,000 active, Army Reserve, and National Guard service members of the Armed Forces had their active duty service involuntarily extended by Stop-Loss orders.²³ And that number continues to grow. Nearly all were Soldiers in the U.S. Army, Army Reserve or Army National Guard. The continued use of Stop-Loss prompted the new Secretary of Defense, Robert M. Gates in January 2007, to send a memorandum to the secretaries of the military departments setting 28 February 2007 as a deadline for the submission of plans to minimize Stop-Loss for regular and Reserve Component forces.

However, given that the Army's top personnel readiness priority is to ensure that units deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan with personnel readiness numbers above 90% limits the Army's flexibility. Later after Gates issued his deadline, the use of Stop-Loss across the Army actually increased.²⁴ During the surge period of 2007 to 2008 the total number of Soldiers affected by Stop-Loss continued to increase. This seemed to put the Army directly at odds with the Secretary of Defense, the U.S. Congress, and the American people.

The All-Volunteer Army appeared to be in jeopardy as Stop-Loss created compulsory service, a seemingly hidden conscription or backdoor draft.²⁵ The prolonged use of the Army with its enormous personnel force requirements in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) era is unprecedented during the 35-year history of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF). However, with the United States at war for eight years in Afghanistan and six years in Iraq – a real test of the All-Volunteer Force -- ending the use of Stop-Loss would not be easy. Yet, underpinning the AVF is recruiting and retention. They remain the key building blocks for the AVF. Threatening both is the combination of GWOT

duration, the tempo of operations, and the difficult nature and repetitive nature of deployments.

Most new Soldiers will likely see at least one deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan and although the Army is currently meeting its recruiting goals, it relies on Stop-Loss to maintain unit cohesion and preparedness for deploying units.²⁶ Stop-Loss is critical for unit cohesion and small unit leadership continuity since more than half of those affected by Stop-Loss are sergeants. As Secretary of Defense Mr. Robert Gates stated, "...if they left a unit it would leave a pretty gaping hole..."²⁷ And it appears they would leave as reenlistment rates for Soldiers affected by Stop-Loss are well below average. As it stands today, of the "7,000 active duty Soldiers currently under Stop-Loss who are actually past their contractual obligation and could walk today,... only 8% reenlist out of stop loss status--thus not very many".²⁸

Personnel Readiness and Combat Ready Forces

Since 2004 the Army relied, in part, on Stop-Loss to ensure unit level personnel readiness levels and unit cohesion remained high for units deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan. Personnel readiness is a critical factor in the overall evaluation of unit's readiness to conduct its core missions in a combat theater.

Readiness is measured by a unit commander who provides objective and subjective measurements of the status of resources and training in their unit. Unit commanders assigned to accomplish current operational requirements in Iraq and Afghanistan must determine and report a percent effective (PCTEF) level to indicate the status of their units' ability to execute the currently assigned mission(s). The PCTEF and level of readiness should coincide when the tasks, conditions and standards

associated with the currently assigned mission precisely match the tasks, conditions, and standards associated with the mission for which the unit is organized.²⁹

If readiness levels are too low the unit will not likely deploy until readiness levels improve. Under ARFORGEN, as units prepare for an upcoming deployment more and more attention and resources are applied to ensure that unit readiness is at the highest possible level before they enter the combat theater.

Personnel readiness refers to more than the status of an individual Soldier; it represents the collective capability of the unit's population. The readiness of the unit is measured as percentages of the required unit personnel available to deploy the percentage of unit personnel qualified in their specific military occupational specialty, and the experience level of the unit as a percentage of fill for senior grade personnel. Stop-Loss relieves some of the pressure on the personnel manning system to continue to meet the persistent challenge of manning the force at the highest possible levels of personnel readiness for deploying units. Personnel Readiness remains a key underpinning for the unit's overall readiness and is therefore a critical factor in determining when a unit meets the readiness threshold for deployment.

Requirements Vs End-strength: A Balancing Act

The difficult task of matching readiness with resources is made more so because resources do not connect directly to readiness. That is, it is not clear how much additional capability – or readiness a given expenditure buys. How much more readiness does recruiting more people or buying more spare parts gain? The question has no easy answer, because readiness results from a complex interaction of many things, including people (their number and skills), equipment, (amount on hand and its condition), command and control capabilities, strategic lift and so forth.³⁰

What does the Army need to do its job? How much structure and how many Soldiers, civilians and contractors does it need? The Defense Planning Guidance (DPG)

tells the Army what missions and scenarios to organize and train for. Internal Army processes referred to as Total Army Analysis (TAA) in concert with Force Design Updates (FDU) lead to decisions about specific types of units to create. This process also determines what units will be reserve component or active duty.³¹

The result of these force design decisions is the Army's programmed force, which is the set of units and organizations that exist both in the current year and future year. The programmed force is the sum of all requirements for military people by grade and skill in all units and organizations and is known as Force Structure Allowance (FSA).³² The Army's end-strength should be equal to or greater than the combination of the FSA, TTHS (Trainees, Transients, Holdees, Students)³³, and other manning requirements (See Figure 1). The Army uses the term TTHS to represent Soldiers not assigned to units.

If the Army's end-strength was equal to or greater than requirements then logically there should be sufficient numbers of Soldiers to provide deploying forces with personnel readiness levels above 90% without a reliance on Stop-Loss. However, the Army's structure and end-strength appear to be out of sync. The routine, systemic and long-term manning shortfall indicates that the combination of the Force Structure Allocation (FSA), TTHS, and other manning requirements exceed the Army's ability to man the force and therefore exceed the Army's end-strength.

Emerging requirements (i.e. Transition Teams, Worldwide Individual Augmentation System (WIAS), Joint Manning Document (SMD) and modular headquarters conversion requirements) will continue to challenge the inventory of senior grade personnel both officers and NCOs.³⁴

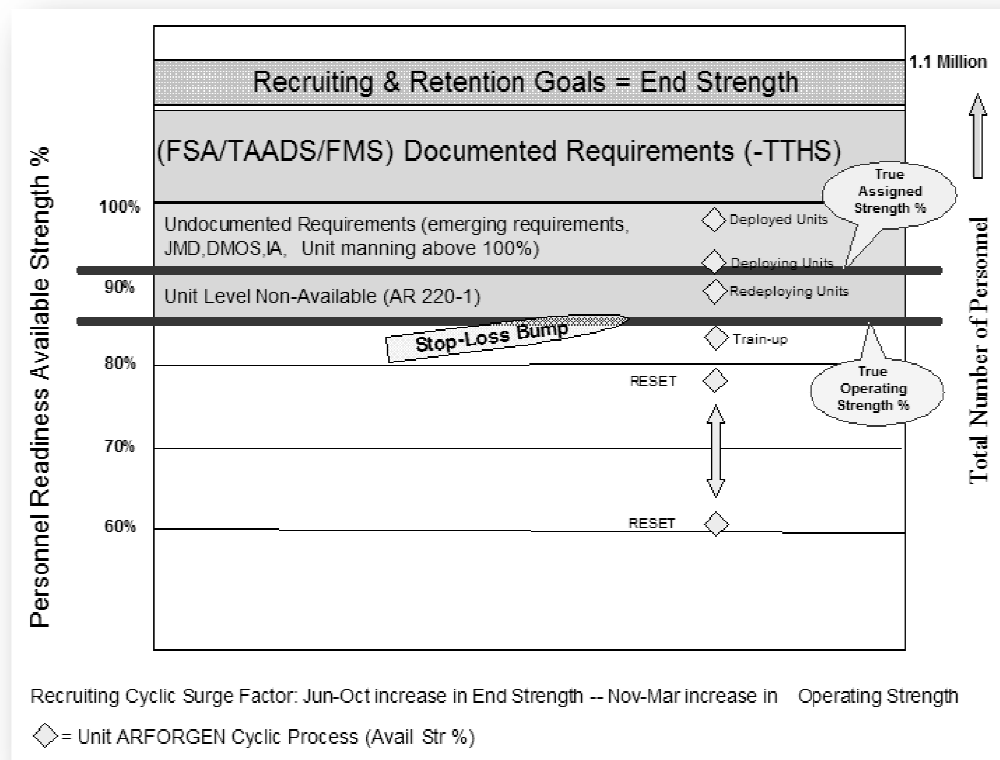


Figure 1:

The true operating strength of the Army is not 100% of the Army's end-strength. The operating strength is the Army's end-strength minus TTHS. The difference between the total personnel end-strength and the operating strength is known as the Operating Strength Deviation. The Army tried various methods to reduce this deviation but historically TTHS continues to run about 13% for the active component.³⁵ The Army has consistently tried to reduce the number of Soldiers in the TTHS account to theoretically provide more Soldiers to units in the operating forces³⁶ perceiving that a reduction in the TTHS could assist in meeting deploying unit personnel readiness. However, reducing TTHS is a short-term fix to personnel readiness and comes at a long-term cost to the health of the force.³⁷

The TTHS is predominately the human capital investment strategy where the U.S. Army invests in its people.³⁸ More than 85% of the TTHS population is in some type of training (Initial Entry Training being the largest cohort) and is used to build and maintain a ready and relevant force. Individual training and leader development form the foundation of the Army's investment in Soldiers. These Soldiers are in the service getting paid but are not filling authorized positions in units because they are in training or in professional development programs preparing them for increasing positions of responsibility.³⁹ Interestingly, Stop-Loss and Stop-Move orders are currently depressing TTHS numbers because Soldiers are not leaving the Army, attending training or moving to other units due to deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) at normal historical rates.

Beyond the math of FSA, TTHS and End-strength, other factors affect personnel readiness. At the unit level there are Soldiers who, although assigned to an authorized position in a unit, are medically or administratively not available for deployment. Additionally, a host of requirements exists for Soldiers both inside and outside the Army's personnel authorizations to include, approved military over-strength positions, the Joint Staff, OSD, Joint Task Forces, other interagency and undocumented requirements not found on organizational manning documents published by the United States Army's Force Management Agency and not part of the Force Structure Allocation. The long war's tremendous increase in manpower requirements has a detrimental effect on Army unit personnel readiness because chronic personnel shortages become more acute as personnel requirements continue to grow without accompanying growth in personnel.

The current Grow the Army initiative, a recently approved 65,000 Soldier increase in the active Army's end-strength will not reduce the Army's reliance on Stop-Loss. According to Charles Henning,

Some observers have noted that the Army could divert some of this increase to minimizing or eliminating the need for Stop-loss. However, it appears that the Army is more committed to growing its force structure from 42 to 48 Brigade Combat Teams and from 75 to 83 Modular Support brigades and will therefore continue to use Stop-Loss to reduce unit shortages.⁴⁰

The High Demand for Army Forces

Although Stop-Loss remains a universally unpopular policy,⁴¹ it also remains necessary in order for the Army to meet its personnel needs for deploying units. Though unpopular, there appears to be no short-term fix to permanently limit or eliminate the routine use of Stop-Loss under the current circumstances. America's demand for more land forces to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan continues to be the primary contributor for the Army's personnel readiness challenges.

If demand remains constant, 11 to 19 Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) per ARFORGEN cycle deployed, there will likely remain some degree of Stop-Loss in use. Once the demand is reduced to 10 BCTs or less deployed per cycle coupled with the completed Grow the Army (GTA) initiative for a force of 1.1 million -- there will no longer be a need for Stop-Loss.

Once the demand for Army forces falls below the 11 BCTs threshold, the Army can meet the prescribed DOD unit deployment goal. For active duty units, this goal is a ratio of 1 year deployed and 2 years at home station and 1 to 4 for Army Reserve and Army National Guard units - without reliance on Stop-Loss. However, if the demand remains above 10 BCTs per ARFORGEN (Army Force Generation) cycle the Army's

current strategy appears to remain reliant, in varying degrees, on Stop-Loss in order to ensure the highest levels of personnel readiness possible for deploying units.

If the demand for Army forces remains above 10 BCTs per ARFORGEN cycle, a personnel policy change is necessary to improve unit level personnel readiness without the habitual reliance on a Stop-Loss policy. Based on current operations and the likelihood that the demand for Army forces will remain above the 10 BCTs threshold, the following four options should be considered in order to ultimately reduce the Army's reliance on Stop-Loss.

Chronic Personnel Shortage Mitigation Options

The first option is to keep the current programs in place as long as Stop-Loss is legally sufficient under the declaration of the current national emergency. This course of action is clearly feasible and suitable to the needs of the Army but remains controversial as DOD, the Congress and the American people have been critical of the Army's long term use of Stop-Loss.

Another option, and one that is currently working through Army and OSD personnel policy divisions, is to provide monetary incentives intended to keep Soldiers beyond the limits of their original contract. This incentive remains as an involuntarily extension of the Soldier's contract. This may be suitable and acceptable but the feasibility is questionable. First, Soldiers who may have intended to reenlist will now wait to reenlist in order to reap the monetary rewards of Stop-Loss incentives. This may in the long-term, hurt retention that is vital to sustaining the All-Volunteer Army. As we have seen, Soldiers who are affected by Stop-Loss are unlikely to reenlist. It appears then that Soldiers would not voluntarily extend regardless of the monetary benefit to

stay. This will negatively affect the personnel readiness of the unit and unit cohesion. Forced extensions with extra pay do little to overcome the Army's reliance on Stop-Loss but this change is likely to be approved and implemented until a long term solution is found.

The third option is to improve the utility of and access to Soldiers in the Individual Ready Reserve system. The Individual Ready Reserve (IRR)⁴² was once considered a near limitless resource from which the active Army could draw to fulfill individual manning shortfalls. However, the failure of the IRR system to provide enough individual augmentation for deploying units is likely an important reason as to why the Army remains reliant on Stop-Loss.

The IRR could provide a deep bench of potential candidates to fill units scheduled to deploy in sufficient time to train with the unit, thereby improving their individual skills and contributing to the unit in sufficient time before deployment to be a positive factor in unit cohesion. Although the IRR currently has more than 100,000 Soldiers, enlisted and officer, representing over 200 Military Occupational Skills ranging from combat arms, combat support, and combat service support specialties, only about 20,000 were mobilized for post 9-11 duty in the active force. Slightly less than 5,000 are mobilized today, about 7 percent of the current IRR population.⁴³

The Army continues to demonstrate a significant reliance on individual manpower augmentation to support successful prosecution of combat operations. The Army's efforts to leverage the IRR during Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom to fill the individual manpower requirements of deploying and CONUS support base formations demonstrated the IRR is not sufficiently capable of meeting the wartime

individual mobilization manpower needs of the force. Earlier, in 1998 a course correction was made to improve access to and availability of the IRR.⁴⁴

The need for U.S. forces will likely wax and wane in the coming years. In this dynamic environment, reserve component forces will remain vital. They provide the flexibility to expand the operation force quickly and efficiently when the demand for troops suddenly increases.⁴⁵

However, the IRR was never able to meet expectations because the demand for Army forces remained high and the IRR could only provide a limited capability. Finally, a unique and, as yet, not fully embraced option for the Army is that of Total Force Integration (TFI), which may ultimately lend itself to robust manning for deploying units.

While differences will persist, the Secretary of Defense should recognize the cultural divide that exists between the reserve components and the active components, and should develop a new total force Integration Policy to achieve the next level of integration among all components.⁴⁶

The Army seems irreversibly hooked on too much force structure (too many spaces) and too few people. A compromise may be the solution. The Army must maintain its current force structure and its current personnel end-strength. However, it could decrease active duty positions in select units and replace them with National Guard or Army Reserve positions. Potentially, there could be enough personnel to fill all positions with full and part-time Soldiers. Generally, the Army would need to convert at least 10,000 active duty spaces to National Guard or Army Reserve spaces – 10,000 equals the number of active duty Soldiers currently on Stop-Loss. This must be done without adding new requirements or changing end-strength. This deepens the pool of active duty military personnel against a smaller total active duty requirement.

The Secretary of Defense is now emphasizing TFI with the publication in October 2008 of DOD Directive 1200.17 on managing the Reserve Components as an operational force. He also concurred with many of the recommendations provided in

January 2008 by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves. The commission was tasked to assess the roles and missions of the National Guard and Reserve components. The commission's findings resulted in 95 recommendations of which the Secretary of Defense codified 82 of the recommendations stating that, "The Congress, the Commission, and the Department all recognize that the National Guard and the Army Reserves are integral to the Total Force."

Well ahead of DoD's new Total Force Policy, the Air Force established the Future Total Force (FTF) Project in 1997 to explore potential solutions to persistent challenges related to recruiting, retention, manning and budget calling for a seamless integration of active and Reserve Component forces. Currently the U.S. Air Force is increasing its integration of the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard personnel into training, operations and deployments with regular component units and to facilitate force integration through association.

Augmenting an active duty Air Force unit with Reserve Component personnel creates a reserve associate unit. Generally, the active unit provides the majority of the administrative and support functions, while the reservists contribute directly to expanding the capacity for flight operations. The active duty and reserve units maintain separate chains of command but operate the same aircraft. The active associate concept is very similar to the reserve associate relationship outlined above. The principle difference is that instead of reserve personnel augmenting an active operation, the reverse is true. Active duty personnel help operate reserve aircraft at a reserve operating location. Both the active and reserve forces maintain separate chains of command, but come together to perform the same mission.

The Blended Unit is the Air Force's newest concept. A blended organization more fully integrates the operation and shares the responsibility for the operation of the mission across both components. Instead of having a reserve unit and an active unit working closely together, a Blended Unit is essentially a single unit comprised of active and reserve members.⁴⁷

Integration improves combat effectiveness by increasing the cross-flow of ideas among the components; it generates efficiencies and can foster mutual respect. Moreover, integration allows the regular component to leverage the experience and expertise of the reserve and guard organization. Currently, there are more than 100 integration initiatives ongoing in the USAF.⁴⁸

The idea of multi- component units is not new to the Army and earnestly began working toward better integration with then Chief of Staff of the Army, General Dennis Reimer's 1998 white paper entitled "One Team, One Fight, One Future." Additionally, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen's memorandum was consistent with Gen Reimer's white paper emphasizing the need for further integration between active and Reserve Components in the Total Force and said that,

In order to ensure readiness and face the threats of tomorrow and beyond...Our Total Force must work together. We can no longer achieve our operational goals as separate active and reserve components. This new initiative helps us create a seamless Total Army for the 21st Century, integrated so that it captures the core competencies of the service components. It increases the Army's readiness and capability to respond in an ever-changing environment.⁴⁹

Improved Personnel Readiness without over-reliance on Stop-Loss

After years of continued reliance on Stop-Loss, a quick-win strategy may be necessary for the Army initially but should be quickly followed by a long-term solution. In

the short term, the Army should adopt monetary incentives to fulfill immediate requirements currently being satisfied by using Stop-Loss and should continue to offer these incentives until September 2010 in order to provide enough time to establish a better long term strategy. Long-term reliance on these incentives may initially have a positive influence on recruiting and retention because they support Soldiers and families' desire for predictability.⁵⁰ However, continuous use in the long-term will likely have a negative impact on recruiting and retention

Second, DOD should impose limitations on the use of Stop-Loss which address the primary centers of Congressional and public concern. Therefore, no Soldier will be involuntarily extended who has completed his 8-year initial commitment of active and/or reserve duty or has completed at least 12 months of duty in a combat zone such as Iraq or Afghanistan.

Third, a long-term solution is needed that requires an improved IRR system, improved balancing of personnel requirements – the balancing of force structure and the operating force, and a plan to more aggressively adopt Total Force Integration by blending select active and reserve component personnel into a seamless combined organization.

Improving reliable access to a quality bench from the IRR of trained Soldiers during short or long periods of a national emergency or partial mobilization is a critical element in the overall readiness of the Army. This is especially critical since the Army transferred much of its Reserve Component forces from strategic reserve to operational forces. An investment in the IRR represents a new strategic reserve with more than

100k Soldiers available for contingencies. Similarly, the commission on the Guard and Army Reserve recommended that,

Members of the current Individual Ready Reserve and all military retirees should be placed in either the Strategic Ready Reserve Force or the Strategic Standby Reserve – and both categories should be managed to take advantage of these individuals' vast experience, including for homeland-related missions...that support integration, a continuum of service, the operational use of the reserves forces, and the continuing strategic depth and the ability to surge when required...⁵¹

DOD and Army leaders must close the gap between the Force Structure Allocation, the Army's end-strength, and the true Operating Strength of the Army by ensuring all requirements are accounted for to include Joint Manning Documents (JMDs), and Directed Military Over-strength positions and other emerging requirements. Every time the Army fills undocumented requirements, there are fewer personnel to fill documented requirements. This mismatch drives personnel readiness down for Army units and makes long-term reliance on Stop-Loss inevitable. In concert with the ARFORGEN model, the IRR and Total Force Integration (AC, RC and blended unit examples), are key for long-term personnel readiness level and unit manning improvements. Clearly, FTF and its Army derivative, the Multi-Component unit needs to become a more common unit configuration.

Total Force Integration is a long-term solution for peacetime and wartime manning requirements. With the use of a multi-component unit-manning model or TFI it is possible to require fewer active duty personnel (without a change in end-strength), augmented by limited active duty periods for associated ARNG and USAR personnel when the unit is not deployed. When deployed and preparing for an imminent

deployment as predicted by ARFORGEN, the USAR and ARNG augmentation would become fulltime and the Reserve Component Soldiers ordered to active duty.

These units could train together, use the same equipment, and deploy together. Full integration ultimately reduces personnel shortfalls, improves unit personnel readiness, and eliminates the need for a long-term reliance on Stop-Loss. Similar to the U.S. Air Force's program, the Army can expect that the integration of National Guard and Reserve Soldiers with Regular Army Soldiers to provide rewards such as improved operating and fielding of new systems and improvements in the total force's relevancy. Integration would relieve stress on active duty members and provide a cost effective and more balanced force. Soldiers could more easily transition from active to the Reserve Component and back again as needed by the Soldier thereby improving retention, predictability, and quality of life. Now that much of the National Guard and Army Reserve forces have transferred from strategic reserve to the operational Army, it provides an opportunity to better integrate the Total Force under the same statutory guidance.⁵² It also improves the integration of the Active, National Guard and Army Reserve forces. As emphasized by Secretary Gates, "The Congress, the Commission, and the Department recognize that the National Guard and the Reserves are integral to the Total Force and have assumed a greater operational role in today's force."⁵³

Conclusion

It appears the All-Volunteer Army will continue to operate with fewer Soldiers available to fill all of its force structure requirements unless changes are made to better align personnel resources to requirements. The Cold War approach to personnel readiness is not synchronized with today's reality of persistent engagement. Balancing

requirements and Soldier resources in today's complex world for an Army that is slow to change makes this balance unlikely. Therefore improved, long-term mitigation strategies, such as TFI, are necessary to improve unit level personnel readiness without the long-term and broad reliance on Stop-Loss.

For short term, intermittent requirements, Stop-Loss must remain an option to maintain personnel readiness. However, over reliance on Stop-Loss is unpopular and counter intuitive to the idea of an All-Volunteer Force. If the Army remains persistently engaged in the future, a long-term mitigation strategy such as Total Force Integration (TFI) is a way to operate as one team while reducing full time active duty requirements during a unit's non-deployed phase and also lessen the need for Stop-Loss. In order to achieve readiness, the Army must recognize that a balanced approach to Total Force Integration includes the US Army Reserve, the IRR and the Army National Guard as critical partners with the active Army.

Endnotes

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⁶ Colonel Julie Manta, "Military Human Resource Management," in *How the Army Runs: A Senior Leader Reference Handbook 2005-2006* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, September 30, 2005).

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⁸ U.S. Department of the Army, *2007 Army Posture Statement*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 2007)

⁹ Senator Joe Lieberman, "Senate Subcommittee Seeks to Boost Troop Strength" *Army Magazine*, April 25 2007, 14-18.

¹⁰ James Jay Carafano, *The Army Reserves and the Abrams doctrine: Unfulfilled Promise, Uncertain Future*, Heritage Lectures No 869, (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation, April 18, 2005). First to Fight Funding held that units that were likely to see combat first should have all the financial resources they needed to be fully armed, trained, and manned. The remaining forces, primarily in the Reserve Components, received minimal funding for maintenance of equipment and individual and crew training. This resulted in steeply tiered readiness, with many Reserve units being unready for deployment with significant post-mobilization training and equipping.

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¹² U.S. Department of the Army, *Department of the Army Personnel Policy Guidance for Contingency Operations in Support of GWOT*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, February 13, 2008).

¹³ Major Scott Nester, *TTHS is not a four-letter word*, Landpower Essay NO 04-7W (Arlington, VA: AUSA, Institute of Land Warfare, November 2004).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Farrisee, "HQDA Active Component (AC) Manning Guidance for Fiscal Years 2008-2010." Current mitigation of manning shortages. Commanders must utilize the following mitigation strategies within the current manning environment to improve unit readiness: (a) Utilize officer substitutions within the same grade, one grade lower or one grade higher where possible to fill shortages. (b) Utilize enlisted substitutions within the same grade, one grade lower or two grades higher to fill shortages. (c) Maximize grade and MOS substitution to fill critical needs. (d) Fill vacant AC positions with Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) and Retiree Recall personnel.

¹⁶ U.S. Army Chief of Staff Memorandum, Office of the Chief of Staff, "HQDA Active Component (AC) Manning Guidance for Fiscal Years 2008-2010", July 10, 2008.

¹⁷ OSD P&R comment on the FY 2009 Defense Authorization Bill Senate Amendments to S. 3001 undated.

¹⁸ US Code, Title 10, Ex. Ord. No. 12728. Delegating President's Authority To Suspend any Provision of Law Relating to Promotion, Retirement, or Separation of Members of Armed Forces provided: By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 673c [now 12305] of title 10 of the United States Code and section 301 of title 3 of the United States Code, I hereby order: ...the authority vested in the President by section 673c [now 12305] of title 10 of the United States Code (1) to suspend any provision of law relating to promotion, retirement, or separation applicable to any member of the armed forces determined to be essential to the national security of the United States, and (2) to determine, for the purposes of said section, that members of the armed forces are essential to the national security of the United States.

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²³ Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, *Point Paper on Stop-Loss*, (Alexandria, VA: Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, n.d.) <http://memberconnections.com/olc/filelib/LCNG/cpages/9004/Library/docs/PP-Stop%20Loss%20Compensation.pdf> (accessed February 3, 2009).

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²⁶ U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *Recruiting, Retention, and Future Levels of Military Personnel*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Congressional Budget Office, October 2006), 25.

²⁷ "DOD Press Briefing with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen from the Pentagon, Arlington, VA," DefenseLink News Transcript, May 08, 2008, <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4225>, (accessed November 18, 2008).

²⁸ Colonel Debbra A. Head, email message to Colonel Patricia L. O'keefe, January 28, 2009.

²⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, *Unit Status Reporting*, Army Regulation 220-1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, December 19, 2006).

³⁰ John F. Schank, Margaret C. Harrell, Harry J. Thie, Monica M. Pinto, and Jerry M. Solinger, *Relating Resources to Personnel Readiness, Use of Army Strength Management Models*, (Santa Monica, CA, 1997), 8.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Nester, *TTHS is Not a Four-Letter Word*. The Army uses the term Trainees, Transients, Holders and Students (TTHS) to represent Soldiers not assigned to units. TTHS often is viewed in a negative light and seen as the reason the Army cannot have more units in the force structure. Although this is technically true, it may be more appropriate to consider TTHS as the investment required for the Army to have trained and educated leaders and Soldiers ready and available to perform their missions. TTHS allows the Army to transition citizens to Soldiers, maintain leader development systems unequaled in any other military force and ensure that trained Soldiers are provided to unit commanders. The active Army's total strength is divided between the Force Structure Allowance (FSA)—the total of all authorized positions in units—and TTHS. With the Army's congressionally mandated endstrength of 482,400, the FSA is set at 419,100 and the TTHS target is 63,300. While TTHS is a target and not a limit, Army policy decisions influence its size and composition.

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³⁵ Manta, "Military Human Resource Management.

³⁶ Nester, *TTHS is Not a Four-Letter Word*.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Henning, *U.S. Military Stop Loss Program*.

⁴¹ Berger, "Stop Loss: Debate the Issue Now."

⁴² Global Security, "The Individual Ready Reserve" <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/usar-irr.htm> (accessed February 23, 2009). As of 22 June 2004, the Army's Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) contained slightly more than 111,000 Soldiers. These trained Soldiers may be called upon to fill vacancies in Army Reserve units and may replace Soldiers in Active and Reserve Units. Part of the Army's Ready Reserve, the IRR involves individuals who have had training, served previously in the Active Component or the Selected Reserve (such as a member of an Army Reserve unit), and may have some period of Military Service Obligation remaining. Unlike new recruits, these are seasoned, experienced Soldiers who can contribute significantly to Army readiness. The IRR, as it exists, is mandated by Congress under Title 10 of the U.S. Code. In accordance with implementing instructions contained in Army Regulation 135-91, members of the IRR can be required to join

an Army Reserve unit if they are statutorily obligated and have a skill needed by the Army. From Global Security.com (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/usar-irr.htm>).

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⁴⁶ U.S. Secretary of Defense, "Recommendations of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves," memorandum for the Secretaries of the Military Departments, Washington, DC, November 24, 2008, see: "Attachment 1: Implementation of Recommendations from the Commission on The National Guard and Reserves: total Force Policy – Recommendation 81."

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⁵⁰ U.S. Department of the Army, *2007 Army Posture Statement*.

⁵¹ U.S. Secretary of Defense, "Recommendations of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves," memorandum for the Secretaries of the Military Departments, Washington, DC, November 24, 2008, see: "Attachment 4: Recommendation for which No Action is Directed from the Commission on The National Guard and Reserves, 1-3.

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⁵³ Ibid.